

7. Downtown Design Overlay District

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Downtown Design Overlay District is to establish design standards to foster a strong viable downtown as a commercial, civic, residential and cultural center. The Downtown Design Overlay District affects properties in the B-3 zoning district plus property located in the South Main Historic District, the boundaries of which may be amended from time to time.

The district is designed to forward aesthetic and economic objectives of the City by controlling the site design and appearance of development consistent with urban design and economic revitalization principles; implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and the *Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership Design Guidelines* to preserve and restore unique and historic buildings; ensure the coordinated design of new buildings and changes to existing buildings; minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties from buildings that may detract from the character and appearance of the district; and aid in improving the overall economic viability of the district.

2. Applicability

The standards of the Downtown Design Overlay District shall apply to new construction, and to the restoration, replacement, expansion or modification of any property (such as painting, roofing, siding, signage, architectural component substitution). Alteration of an existing building not visible from a public street or alley and/or the interior remodeling of an existing structure shall not cause the exterior of the building to be subject to the architectural design standards. All other projects are subject to the following:

- a. Certain minor actions may be approved by the Community Development Department, such as the addition or replacement of windows or doors complementary to the color and architectural style of the building, and the addition or replacement of awnings and canopies. The Community Development Department may authorize renovation of the exterior appearance of a building to include repainting, reroofing, re-siding or replacing with identical colors and materials previously approved by the Downtown Architectural Review Board, or colors and materials similar and/or complementary to the existing structure. In the event of accidental damage or destruction, the Community Development Department may authorize the replacement or reconstruction of a building, structure, sign or awning previously approved by the Downtown Architectural Review Board.

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- b. Community Development Department staff shall determine if a structure and/or site is of historic significance by examining the list of City-designated sites and districts, and if so, whether requirements of the Historic Preservation Ordinance apply. Where a property is a City-designated historic site or structure, the Historic Preservation Commission shall review exterior alterations, additions and/or signage and, if compatible, approve changes; review by the Downtown Architectural Board is not required.

3. Procedure

An application for project approval shall be submitted to the Community Development Department for review by the Downtown Architectural Review Board. The Building Inspector shall not issue a permit for the modification, expansion or addition to an existing building, the construction of any new structure, or for the replacement and/or installation of new signage, prior to approval by the Downtown Architectural Review Board. Where an applicant wishes to contest a decision of the Downtown Architectural Review Board, the applicant may submit a written appeal to the Board of Appeals. The Board of Appeals shall consider the regulations of this ordinance, the *Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership Design Guidelines*, and the particular circumstances of a proposed project as it relates to the property and surrounding area, to affirm, modify or deny an appeal of a decision of the Downtown Architectural Review Board.

Project Review Submittal Requirements:

a. Minor alterations/repair of existing buildings.

Minor alterations/repair of existing buildings include painting, roofing, siding, architectural component substitution and signage.

- (1) A clear depiction of the *existing appearance* of the property. Color photographs are recommended, including adjoining and nearby properties.
- (2) A clear depiction of the *proposed appearance* of the property. Paint charts and/or color photographs of replacement architectural components are recommended

b. New construction and major alterations/additions to existing buildings.

Major alterations to a property include modification of the physical configuration of a building, structural changes, demolition and the addition or removal of bulk.

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- (1) A clear depiction of the *existing appearance* of the property. Color photographs are recommended, including adjoining and nearby properties.
- (2) Site plan to depict the existing building(s), proposed building addition(s), and/or new building(s).
- (3) Front and side building elevations drawn to scale.
- (4) Samples and/or photographs of siding, brick type, roof shingles, paint chips, doors and windows, ornamentation and other exterior materials.
- (5) Details of exterior lighting.

4. Architectural Review Standards

To provide criteria for implementation of the Downtown Design Overlay District, the following architectural review principles apply:

- a. Context refers to how a structure fits with the surrounding area. New design elements should be compatible with nearby development. A building addition should match or complement the existing structure.
- b. Scale is the relative size and mass of structures compared to one another. A small building should not be constructed adjacent to large buildings unless provisions are made to minimize the difference in scale. The visual continuity of roofs and contributing elements (parapet walls, cornices, etc.) should be maintained in building development or redevelopment.
- c. Balance and Proportion is the relationship of one part of a building to another with the inclination that each part is in harmony with other parts. Building facades, including details, should contain a proportion of height and width.

The vertical pattern of exterior building elements should be compatible in design and elevation of existing buildings in the immediate area which conform to the general design theme of Downtown Fond du Lac.

The horizontal pattern of exterior building elements formed by patterns of windows and doors should be spaced at regular intervals across all visible facades of the building, and should be compatible with existing buildings in the immediate area which conform to the general design theme of Downtown Fond du Lac.

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- d. Unity and Theme pertains to a consistent style and purpose especially applicable to a multiple building development. Good unity can be accomplished with the use of the same materials throughout a development. An accessory structure should be compatible with the principal structure in terms of character, roof shape, building material, color and architectural detail.
- e. Color and Materials elements apply to a building exterior that is generally visible to a public street and/or alley.
 - (1) Building color should be non-reflective and relate to existing neighborhood patterns. High intensity, florescent, day glow and/or neon, and metallic colors are discouraged; where such colors constitute a component of a standardized corporate theme or identity, muted versions colors should be used.
 - (2) Primary exterior building materials should be similar and/or complementary to existing structures within the immediate area and the downtown area as a whole. Building materials should consider the facades of the structure and an adjoining structure to provide a suitable transition between facades. Where a side and/or rear elevation is not exposed to view from a public street, a combination of primary and secondary materials may be used.
 - (a) Acceptable materials include glass, brick, ceramic tile, terra cotta, cultured stone, cut stone, carved stone, stucco, EIFS, wood, decorative concrete block. Stone or brick facing shall be of relatively even coloration and consistent size. The use of non-decorative exposed concrete block, pre-engineered metal building systems, and sheet metal is discouraged. The use of plywood or Oriented Strand Board (OSB) or similar materials is prohibited. Metal roofs, decorative metal and metal accent components may be considered. Other building materials may be considered when appropriate to a property and the downtown as a whole.
 - (b) The traditional storefront design theme, characterized by strong horizontal and vertical rhythms formed by building openings, columns, cornices, kick plates, sign bands, large display windows and transom windows shall be employed for all new nonresidential buildings.
 - (c) Building facades should not be cluttered with brackets, wiring, meter boxes, antennae, gutters, downspouts and other appurtenances. Appurtenances shall be colored to blend with

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the building exterior. Ornamentation that is inconsistent with the general design theme of the downtown area is prohibited.

- (d) Clear or slightly tinted glass should be used. Mirror glass, smoked glass or heavily tinted glass is not permitted.
 - (e) When façade changes are made, hidden architectural elements and original materials should be restored or replaced, when practical, to match the architecture of the building.
- f. Windows and doors should be similar in size, proportion and alignment based on the architectural style of the building. Original door and window openings and accenting features shall be maintained where practical.
 - (1) First floor windows are required and shall establish visibility and transparency along the street.
 - (2) Replacement windows and doors should, where possible, fit into the original opening, minimizing the amount of blocking and/or filler panels. Replacements should match the existing/original in size, shape and arrangement of panes.
- g. Awnings and canopies shall be the same type and style for a single building or property and utilize the same mounting characteristics. Awnings on a single building shall have a consistent horizontal alignment across the front of the entire building, unless the slope of the pedestrian walk or ground requires a horizontal stagger. Awning/canopy size, color and placement should complement the architectural character of the building. Soft, weather-treated canvas or vinyl materials which allow for flexible or fixed installations shall be used. Internal illumination/backlighting is discouraged.
- h. Signage. Refer to Section 11.12 D.
- i. Metering and Mechanicals are elements of utility service and mechanical heating, cooling and ventilation systems that are foreign to the architecture (transformers, gas and electric meters, rooftop units, etc.). Utility service boxes, cables, conduits, vents, turbines, flues, chillers and fans, telecommunication devices, and trash/recycling storage receptacle shall be screened from public view by incorporating the following design standards:
 - (1) Locate mechanical equipment and service areas at the rear of the building, along an alley façade or on the building rooftop;

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- (2) Screen mechanical equipment and service areas using architectural screen walls, screening devices and/or landscaping; and
- (3) Mechanical equipment located on a building rooftop shall be set back from the building edge a sufficient distance to screen the equipment from view of adjacent streets.